

Wisconsin Ag Connection

October 22, 2009

Federal Ag Spending Bill Now Signed; Dairy Producers to Get Emergency Aid

President Obama has signed the fiscal year 2010 Agriculture Appropriations Bill on Wednesday, which included \$350 million in additional assistance for dairy farmers. According to U.S. Senator Herb Kohl, who was instrumental in allocating the dairy funds, the USDA will now have to determine how the money is distributed.

"I hope to see the money sent quickly to our farmers who are treading water financially," Kohl said. "We'll continue to work with the Secretary of Agriculture as he determines how this disaster assistance will be used. I'm confident that he recognizes the urgency of the situation."

Wisconsin Congressman Dave Obey says the next step in getting that assistance out will be for the USDA to undertake a 30-day expedited rule making process to determine how the product purchases and payments will be handled. Obey thinks the checks should start going out to farmers shortly thereafter.

"This has been a very difficult year, but this action provides a welcome piece of news to dairy farmers in Wisconsin and around the country," said Obey.

Farmers are struggling with milk prices that have fallen to historic lows while the costs of production. The bill includes \$60 million in cheese and dairy product purchases for food banks and other nutrition and feeding programs, and \$290 million in direct support to dairy farmers using guidelines to be determined by the Secretary of Agriculture under an expedited process.

Original article is located [here](#) .